



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor 2-82 Abn. Public Affairs)

## Safe and sound!

Pfc. Colt Hawkins a paratrooper with HHC, 2nd Bn., 325th Abn. Inf. Regt., 82nd Abn. Div., provides security from the roof of the Sadr City Joint Security Station - the first permanent coalition installation in the area - during a visit there March 4. (See story page 4)

## Large cache discoveries highlight security efforts

By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen  
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers, together with Iraqi security forces uncovered more than 10 times the number of mortar rounds and small arms ammunition this week, thanks in large part to several large cache finds southwest of the Iraqi capital.

More than 21,000 small arms rounds were confiscated this week, up from 2,160 the previous week; while 937 mortar rounds were discovered, up from 89 the

week before.

"Our operations are denying terrorists and extremist elements the ability to wage war against innocent Iraqi citizens and our own forces," said Brig. Gen. John F. Campbell, deputy commanding general for maneuver for MND-B. "Together with our Iraqi counterparts, we continue the effort to provide a lasting peace here in Baghdad."

Noting the impact of the arrival of U.S. and Iraqi troops into Baghdad to implement the new security plan, Campbell pointed to the districts of Adhamiyah and Sadr City as recent suc-

cess stories, based on the decrease in the number of attacks in those areas.

In December, the two eastern Baghdad districts accounted for 440 total attacks, which include small arms fire, improvised explosive device explosions and sectarian murders. From Feb. 5 through March 5 this year, however, Campbell said those attacks dropped to 91.

"Over the past month, there were 18

see Security Page 3

# Family brings promotion closer to home

By Pfc. William Hatton  
7th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - With family and friends far away during a deployment, Soldiers typically bond together to get through the rough days. Although having family close would be nice, most troops can barely picture what it would be like to have their mom or sister in a combat zone with them.

For Staff Sgt. Gary Fink, an intelligence annalist with Company C, 101st Military Intelligence Battalion, 2nd "Dagger" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, not only is his mother in country with him, she was also the one who promoted him from sergeant to staff sergeant, March 1.

"The only thing my mom has been able to come to was my graduation at Fort Jackson, so its great that she's able to be here and be the one to pin me," said Fink, a native of Munford, Al.

Fink's mother, Linda Pegg, works for Kellogg, Brown, and Root, a company contracted with the Army that provides Soldiers with various goods and services in Iraq, Fink said.

His mother works in a Morale,



(Photo by Pfc. William Hatton 7th MPAD)

**Staff Sgt. Gary Fink, an intelligence annalist with Co. C, 101st MI Bn., 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., gets the opportunity to be promoted by his mother, Linda Pegg, at Camp Liberty, Iraq March 1.**

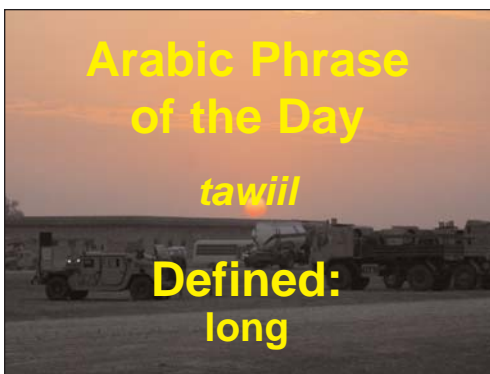
Welfare and Recreation tent at Camp Taji, Iraq, and her being so close, Fink has been able to keep in close contact during his deployment, he said.




With his promotion coming up, it only seemed right to have his mother do it, because she was close, Fink said.

Feelings and emotions were very high

leading up to the ceremony, said Pegg, also a native of Munford, Al. "I was honored to be apart of it," she added. "I'm just very, very proud of my son," Pegg said.

After hard work and beneficial help from leaders on Camp Taji and Camp Liberty, Fink was able to be promoted and spend quality time with his mom.



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report			
	Today	Tomorrow	Thursday
High: 77 Low: 60	High: 73 Low: 50	High: 75 Low: 50	

**Commanding General:** Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr.  
**Public Affairs Officer:** Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl  
**Command Information Supervisor:** Master Sgt. Dave Larsen  
**NCOIC, Print Production:** Sgt. Michael Garrett  
**Editor:** Spc. Shea Butler  
**Staff Writers:** Sgt. Nicole Kojetin, Spc. L.B. Edgar, Spc. Jeffrey Ledesma, Pfc. Ben Gable, Pfc. William Hatton  
**Contributing Writers:** Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, Sgt. Mike Pryor

Contact the *Daily Charge* at VOIP 242-4093, DSN 318-847-2855 or e-mail [david.j.larsen@mnd-b.army.mil](mailto:david.j.larsen@mnd-b.army.mil).

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(Photo by Pfc. Benjamin Gable 7th MPAD)

**Capt. Jeff Noll (left), commander of Co. B, 1st Bn., 23rd Inf. Regt., 3rd SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., speaks with local residents in Baghdad's Sadr City district March 4. Coalition forces, together with the Iraqi Army, searched the area and met with elders to discuss how to better the conditions in the area.**

## Baghdad in Brief

### Iraqi Army detains suspected roadside bombers

KALSU, Iraq - Iraqi Army troops detained three individuals found with bomb-making materials south of Baghdad March 4.

Soldiers of 5th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division who work as partners with 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division detained the three insurgents during a security patrol.

The three suspects were detained for questioning.

# Operation Fardh Al-Qanoon update

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small arms attacks and 19 murders," Campbell said. "That is a dramatic decrease from December totals of 116 and 254, respectively."

The number of IED attacks decreased by nine, compared to the December 2006 monthly total, from 40 down to 31. Campbell said efforts continue in and around Baghdad to take weapons out of the hands of extremists.

The 10th Mountain Division's 2nd "Commando" Brigade alone uncovered 23 caches during the week of Feb. 24 through March 2. In all, MND-B units found 51 caches, up 11 from the previous week.

In one mission alone, Operation Eagle Viper conducted March 1, the Commando Brigade uncovered eight caches and detained 42 suspects in Janabi Village, Iraq.

With additional troops arriving in the Iraqi capital every day, Campbell noted a steady rise in the number of security patrols in and around Baghdad.

"This week, we conducted more than 24,000 patrols in support of Operation Fardh Al-Qanoon," Campbell said. "That's up

more than 2,500 from the previous week. Of those 24,000 patrols, more than half were conducted by the Iraqi police and national police forces."

As security forces throughout Multi-National Division Baghdad expand into the neighborhoods and streets of the city, setting up patrol bases and Joint Security Stations, Campbell said there is an immediate impact on the enemy.

"We've seen in a continuing downward trend in attacks," he said. "Despite determination by terrorists with Al Qaeda in Iraq to instigate sectarian violence through senseless killing of Iraqi civilians, we are seeing the lethality of these vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks declining, significantly," Campbell added. "And sectarian murder levels remain lower than prior to the start of Operation Fardh al-Qanoon."

Even as the level of violence continues to decline in and around the Iraqi capital, civil affairs operations, especially construction projects were slowed this week. The slow down was not due to violence in the city streets, but rather because of heavy rain and religious holidays, according to Navy Cmdr. Michael Sanchez, a civil military affairs

plans officer with MND-B.

However, Sanchez said, the division hosted a team of industry executives, who visited several state-run enterprises in and around Baghdad to gain an appreciation for the existing capabilities and to begin developing strategies to revitalize industry.

"The executive team was sponsored by Paul Brinkley, the Defense Undersecretary for Business Transformation," Sanchez said. "They went to factories in Iskandariyah, Mussayib and Al Doura."

Another group brought in by Brinkley focused on agriculture, according to Sanchez.

"This team of agricultural experts met with division representatives to discuss agriculture-related initiatives being conducted in the farming regions around Baghdad," Sanchez said. The level of violence in the city remained relatively steady, Campbell said, showing no major increase or decrease over the past week. However, he lauded the weapons cache finds during the week.

"Three full weeks into the new security plan, we're seeing the fruits of our labors," he said. "There is progress being made on the streets of Baghdad as we take the fight to the enemies of a free Iraq."

# Construction begins on Sadr City's New JSS

By Sgt. Mike Pryor  
2-82 Abn. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - Faded graffiti on the rooftop of the Al Jezaaer Police Station in Sadr City is one of the only reminders that three years ago, coalition forces occupied the building and stood poised to take the entire area by force.

Now they are back. But this time, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, of the 82nd Airborne Division from Fort Bragg, N.C. come at the invitation of the mayor and other key leaders of the densely-packed Shiite district, and with the full backing of the Iraqi government. They come in partnership with the Iraqi Army and Iraqi police.

This time, they have come to stay.

Coalition and Iraqi forces moved into the area early March 4 to begin establishing a Joint Security Station - a kind of shared command post - inside the Al Jezaaer Police Station in the southeast of the city. The JSS will be the coalition's first permanent base within the boundaries of Sadr City.

"The JSS is going to enable coalition



(Photos by Sgt. Mike Pryor 2-82 Abn. Public Affairs)

**An Iraqi national policeman (foreground) and paratroopers from 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, prepare to begin security operations in support of the creation of a new Joint Iraqi-U.S. Security Station in Sadr City March 4.**

and Iraqi forces to establish a presence in the city," said Lt. Col. Avanauls Smiley, commander of the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. Smiley's Stryker battalion is supporting the operation, providing some of the security while the JSS is being built.

The concept of a JSS in Sadr City would have seemed unlikely in August of 2004. At that time, followers of anti-U.S. cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr - whose father the city is named for - occupied and looted several police stations and government buildings in the district. U.S. forces retook the area in fierce street battles, but eventually pulled back. Over the next two years, coalition and Iraqi forces conducted numerous operations in Sadr City, but chose never to establish a permanent foothold.

Then, last month, came the unveiling of a new security plan for Baghdad. The plan, called operation Fardh al-Qanoon, has placed thousands of additional Iraqi and U.S. troops on the streets to provide a 24-hour-a-day security presence in the city.

Although none of the new troops are based in Sadr City yet, the success of their operations has had a ripple effect on the neighborhood. Key leaders in the community are showing a new willingness to coop-

erate with the government and coalition forces.

The Sadr City Joint Security Station will be a test of this new spirit.

The JSS will house representatives from the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 8th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division; the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 10th Iraqi Army Division; the Tharwa District Iraqi Police Headquarters; the U.S. Army's 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment; and various U.S. police and military training teams according to Maj. Trey Rutherford, the operations officer for 2-325th AIR.

At the JSS, the combined forces will be able to coordinate and control their operations together.

"They are going to be sharing information so they can go out and secure the population," said Smiley.

A vanguard of paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne arrived at the JSS March 4, quickly reinforcing the security around the building with roadblocks and gun positions.

For the next several weeks, engineers and contractors will follow - reinforcing the structure, running power lines, and installing communications systems. When that work is complete, Sadr City's first JSS will be operational.



**Iraqi national policemen prepare to begin security operations in Baghdad's Sadr City district March 4 in support of the creation of the new Sadr City Joint Security Station.**



# 13-year veteran mechanic makes magic number

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp  
1-1 Cav. Public Affairs

CAMPTAJI, Iraq - The 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division marked its 300th reenlistment during this deployment here Feb. 27 with the reenlistment of Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Wyss, a mechanic for Echo Forward Support Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment.

Wyss, a native of Rector, Ark., originally joined the Utah National Guard in 1993 and then moved on to the active Army in 1995. His latest reenlistment was for an indefinite number of years. He received a \$500 cash bonus.

"I want to retire out of the Army, not everybody can do that," said Wyss. "I love what I do - maintaining Army equipment.

"The Army is a system and once you learn that system, you'll find that it works wonderfully for you," added Wyss who has a wife and two daughters in Copperas Cove, Texas.

With 13 years active duty under his belt, only seven years left to retirement, Wyss has spent his entire active duty time stationed at Fort Hood, Texas - having served in numerous units on the post including the 2nd Armor Division, the 4th Infantry Division, the 504th Military Intelligence Brigade and now, the Ironhorse Brigade.

During his time on Hood, Wyss has been to the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., seven times, to the Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, La., twice and completed a seven-month tour in



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp 1-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

**Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Wyss (right), a mechanic for Echo FSC, 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. reenlists at Camp Taji, Iraq as Capt. Miranda Gravel, company commander, Echo FSC, 2-8 Cav., administers the oath of enlistment.**

Djibouti, Africa. The current deployment marks Wyss' second tour in Iraq and the second time he's deployed in support of OIF with the 1st BCT.

"I'd like to stay in this brigade and to stay Cav., but my branch may have other plans for me," said Wyss, explaining that he'd like to remain an Ironhorse trooper but is willing and flexible enough to go wherever the needs of the Army dictate.

Wyss and his family have their own house which they purchased in Copperas Cove, Texas in 1995 and although, they're willing to move if the Army tells them, they do enjoy the feeling of being settled in one place.

"It really does feel like home, and we've actually gotten out and gotten to know the community, not just the military community," said Wyss, who has made many friends and acquaintances, off-post, during his nearly 13 years there.

"I've enjoyed even getting

to know the retired community and I have a buddy of mine who's an old retired guy and we like to go bird and rabbit hunting," he said.

Upon finding out that he was the 300th reenlistment for the Ironhorse Brigade during this rotation, Wyss said it was a big surprise.

"I didn't really know about it until somebody just now told me, but it is an honor and I'm proud to be a part of it," said Wyss.

Wyss's supervisor, Chief Warrant Officer Robert Ramsey, the unit maintenance tech for Echo FSC and a native of Boonville, Mo., praised Wyss' decision to reenlist and his performance as a senior noncommissioned officer.

"He's one of the most professional NCOs I have working for me, and it's a good example when other Soldiers see him reenlist because it shows he's dedicated to the mission," said Ramsey. "He plays by the numbers and understands Soldiers.

He's one of those NCOs you don't ever want to have to replace, so I'm glad he's staying with us."

Immediately after the reenlistment ceremony, Wyss said a few words to those in attendance.

"I'm not a great man when it comes to speeches, but this is a great privilege for me and it's been a great privilege taking care of you out there," said Wyss to some of his own Soldiers as well as people in 2-8 Cavalry, whose vehicles his motor pool services.

When he returns home from this deployment, Wyss plans on taking his family on a vacation to Fredericksburg, Texas. For his long-term goals, Wyss said after he retires from military service, he hopes to buy a farm.

As of Wyss' reenlistment, the Ironhorse Brigade has handed out more than \$3 million in cash bonuses to reenlisting troopers.

Sgt. 1st Class Humberto Flores, 1st BCT senior career counselor and a native of Laredo, Texas, explained what the 300-mark milestone means to the Ironhorse Brigade.

"It really shows the character and caliber of the types of Soldiers we have, and it's amazing to see how many of them are willing to make sacrifices and pay the price for freedom during a time of war," Flores said.

"It's nice to know that even though the 1st Brigade was the last (1st Cav. Div.) brigade to deploy to Iraq that we were also the first one to reenlist 300 Soldiers, leading the division in reenlistments," he said.